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Identical letters dated 23 May 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a table listing the names of the four foreign journalists who entered Syrian territory illegally without the knowledge of the Syrian authorities (see annex). Two of those journalists died while in the company of armed groups in Syria. The two others infiltrated Syria via the Turkish-Syrian border in early March 2012 and were recently handed over to their country's authorities.

I should also like to point out that the French journalist Gilles Jacquier, a correspondent for the France 2 channel, was killed by mortar shells fired by armed terrorists. This was confirmed in paragraph 44 of the report of the Head of the League of Arab States Observer Mission to Syria (S/2012/71). Jacquier was part of a press team of 12 foreign journalists on a field visit to the Akramah al-Jadidah quarter of Homs, a visit made possible by Syria's decision to allow media personnel to move freely in all areas, thereby enabling them to convey the truth about the events to international audiences.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic stresses that Arab and foreign media correspondents who infiltrate the country illegally, in violation of regulations and laws, bear legal responsibility for their actions. They are also responsible for the consequences of illegally entering Syrian territory without the knowledge of the Syrian authorities and of accompanying armed terrorist groups. The Government once again calls on media organizations that wish to send their correspondents to Syria to submit requests in accordance with procedures and the laws in force in order to obtain the required entry visas as quickly as possible. It should be noted that the Syrian Ministry of Information has granted over 600 entry permits to various Arab and foreign media organizations that have applied for them since the events in Syria began; some 166 media organizations were granted entry visas in the period from 25 March to 13 April 2012 alone. The Ministry of Information also facilitates the work of journalists and correspondents throughout the country, ensuring their freedom to move and work in various cities and regions, in accordance with regulations and laws in force. The Ministry has allowed them to conduct field visits to various Syrian governorates, including Homs, Dar'a, Hama, Idlib, Rif Dimashq and Aleppo, with a view to conveying the truth about what is happening in Syria to international audiences and ensuring the success of the mission of United Nations Special Envoy Kofi Annan. In that connection, I would

like to point out that we regularly provide Mr. Annan with lists of detailed information on media organizations and journalists granted entry visas to Syria.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic affirms that the media have an important role to play as they conduct their duties, a role that should be characterized by professionalism and objectivity. This is contrary to the conduct of certain Western and Arab media organizations, which have propagated spurious information on current events in Syria. They have presented a false picture of the situation, obscuring reality in order to serve narrow political agendas that have no relation to the profession of journalism. These media organizations have engaged in incitement that has often led to the killing of many innocent civilians. Such conduct is completely contrary to the noble mission of the media.

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic
to the United Nations

Annex to the identical letters dated 23 May 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

1. **Names of the two journalists who died while in the company of armed groups in Syria after entering Syrian territory illegally**

Name	*Nationality*	*Place of death*
Rémi Ochlik	French	Baba Amr, Homs
Marie Colvin	American	Baba Amr, Homs

2. **Names of the two journalists who entered Syria illegally and who were handed over to the authorities of their country**

Name	*Nationality*	*Observations*
Adem Özköse	Turkish	Entered Syria illegally
Hamit Coşkun	Turkish	Entered Syria illegally